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Media

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25 June 1986  
OCA: 86-1777MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director  
The Deputy DirectorFROM: Dave Gries *DP*

SUBJECT: Action on Leaks

You have taken the lead on the leaks issue and have gotten the attention of the Administration and the media. Soon, the NSPG will meet again to arrive at recommendations, and they will be implemented in due course. Meanwhile, the leaks continue unabated.

I sense that there is another dimension to the issue. As much as the public may enjoy learning the content of leaked intelligence, the public is also practical, usually fair-minded, and probably supportive of efforts to stop leaks that do not uncover wrongdoing or inefficiency. If this assessment is correct, the public would also support a presidential commission tasked with examining the leaks issue and proposing solutions.

From your point of view, a presidential commission working over several months would offer a way to keep the leaks issue alive as you move ahead through the NSPG to impose more discipline on the Executive Branch. Moreover, the findings of a presidential commission, assuming they were constructive, could be cited repeatedly, thus keeping the issue alive into next year.

To be credible, such a commission should speak with a bipartisan voice and represent the political spectrum from liberal through conservative--there would be no point in organizing a commission of the President's known supporters. But it would be effective to hear from respected Democrats like McGeorge Bundy or Harold Brown, especially if their views are coupled with those of well-known moderates and conservatives like Kissinger, Brzezinski or Skowcroft and liberal and conservative businessmen like Linowitz and Reginald Smith. We could also think about an elder statesman journalist like John Chancellor. One or two first amendment attorneys would also be helpful.

If properly instructed, a presidential commission could also contribute to reframing the issue away from specific leaks and spies towards the consequences for national security and the budget of irresponsible journalism.

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